

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana  
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)  
Order in Council, 1953).

FRIDAY, 25TH MAY, 1956.

The Council met at 2 p.m.

## PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker, Sir  
Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

### *Ex-Officio Members:—*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,  
Mr. M. S. Porcher, (Acting)

The Hon. the Attorney General,  
Mr. C. Wylie, Q.C., E.D.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,  
Mr. F. W. Essex.

### *Nominated Members of Executive Council;—*

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Mem-  
ber for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O. B. E.  
(Member for Local Government, Social  
Welfare and Co-operative Develop-  
ment).

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

The Hon. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

### *Deputy Speaker:—*

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

### *Nominated Officials ;—*

Mr. J. I. Ramphal

### *Nominated Unofficials:—*

Mr. T. Lee

Mr. W. A. Phang

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

### *Clerk of the Legislature*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing

### *Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—*

Mr. E. V. Viapree (Ag.)

### *Absent:*

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid  
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agricul-  
ture, Forests, Lands and Mines)—on  
leave.

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Mem-  
ber for Labour, Health and Housing)  
—on leave.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.  
—on leave.

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. E. F. Correia—on leave.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the  
Council held on Thursday, the 17th of  
May, 1956, as printed and circulated,  
were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

## LEAVE TO MEMBERS

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Member for Agriculture (Sir Frank McDavid) for the period extending from the 23rd to the 31st May; to the hon. Member for Health and Housing (Mr. Cummings) and the Hon. Mr. Gajraj for varying periods of time; in one case for 13 days from today, and in the case of Mr. Gajraj for four weeks. These three Members will be absent from the Colony on public business. Mr. Correia is not in his seat, but I understand that he only wishes to be absent from today's meeting.

## PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

**The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex):** I beg to lay on the table:

The Report of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on its consideration of Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1956 — Salaries Structure for Primary School Teachers.

Minutes of meeting of Finance Committee held on 23th March, 1956.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES

## SALARIES STRUCTURE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

**The Chief Secretary (Mr. Porcher, acting):** I beg to give notice of the following motion:

"Be it resolved:

That with reference to Council's Resolution No. IV of the 10th of May, 1956, this Council approves of —

(a) the adoption of the proposals set out in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1956 on Salaries Structure for Primary School Teachers,

subject to the amendments and recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance Committee of the Council dated the 19th of May, 1956; and

(b) provision of the necessary funds to implement the proposals."

I may also take the opportunity to give notice that I propose to move the suspension of Standing Orders at a later stage to enable me to take this motion today. I have His Excellency's permission to do so.

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

## SUGGESTED AMENDMENT OF GAMBLING ORDINANCE

**Mr. Lee:** I beg to give notice of the following motions:

"Whereas the proviso to paragraph (a) of section 20 of the Gambling Prevention Ordinance, No. 19 of 1955, is operating adversely to certain reputable religious, charitable and philanthropic organisations;

Be it resolved . . . That this Council recommends to Government that the Gambling Prevention Ordinance, Cap. 21, be amended to empower the Governor in Council to exempt reputable religious, charitable and philanthropic organisations from the conditions of the proviso to paragraph (a) of section 20 of the Gambling Prevention Ordinance, Cap. 21."

## STELLINGS AT HOG ISLAND AND TROOLIE ISLAND

"Whereas Government agricultural development plans are progressing in Hog Island and Troolie Island;

And whereas it will be necessary for the residents of those islands to have proper facilities for transporting their produce to markets outside of those islands:

Be it resolved:

That this Council recommends that early steps be taken to construct stellings at Hog Island and Troolie Island."

## NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

and the ravages of insects, and who is the officer responsible for them?

RECOMMENDATIONS RE MOTOR  
VEHICLESB.G. OBSERVERS FOR FEDERATION  
CONFERENCE

**Mr. Lee:** I beg to give notice of the following questions:

The Chief Secretary:

Does the Government propose to implement the recommendations of the Licensing Authority with respect to motor cars, and motor vehicles generally, submitted in 1952 and 1953?

## DRAGLINES IN WAKENAAM AND LEGUAN

The Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines:

1. Is Government aware that the two draglines — one for Wakenaam and one for Leguan—are inadequate to cope with the needs of the people of those islands?
2. If the answer is in the negative will Government cause the necessary enquiry to be carried out in those areas?
3. If the answer is in the affirmative, will Government make an adequate supply of draglines available to the people of those islands?

## NEWSPAPER FILES IN THE ARCHIVES

**Mr. Phang:** I beg to give notice of the following questions:

The Chief Secretary :

1. Is Government aware that the files of old colonial newspapers, some dating from the second decade of the nineteenth century, in the Archives Department at the Public Buildings, are the only copies existing at the present day and thus are of inestimable historical value?
2. Will Government state whether these files are still in the Archives Department of the Public Buildings?
3. If the answer to question 2 is in the negative, will Government state where these files are now, what steps are being taken to protect them from fire

**Mr. Raatgever:** Before you proceed to the Order of the Day, Sir, I crave your indulgence to refer to a matter of public importance. I have been asked by many Guianese to protest against the unnecessary and unwarranted expenditure of public funds in sending three Members of the Executive Council to the Federation Conference to be held in Barbados when this Colony has not decided to become a part of the proposed Federation. It is felt that if the Administration is desirous of keeping in touch with discussions in Barbados, one Member of the Executive should suffice.

I would like to remind this Council that this Colony decided some years ago not to federate with the West Indian Islands, and that the West Indian Colonies have gone ahead and decided to federate among themselves. Nothing this Administration can do now can affect that decision. If this Colony is invited to take part in the future when the federal set-up comes into being, Guianese will have to be consulted by plebiscite, as was recently done in Togoland and elsewhere in the British Commonwealth. I myself take strong exception to Members with portfolios and Members without portfolios being absent from this Council Chamber and from this Colony so frequently. It is no wonder that public business cannot be proceeded with expeditiously.

**Mr. Lee:** May I be permitted to support the hon. Member's remarks, Sir? I would like to state that if it is decided that this Colony should join the Federation I think the expenditure for the purpose of sending representatives

[Mr. Lee]

to these Conferences should not be a burden on the Colony's funds; it should be at H. M. Government's expense and not ours.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I rise

**Mr. Speaker:** I hope this is not going to develop into a debate. I must ask Members, if they are in agreement with the views expressed by the Deputy Speaker and another Member, not to repeat what has been said. I cannot allow anything in the nature of support of what has been said, if that is what the hon. Member desires to do.

**Mr. Ramphal:** No, Sir, I am in disagreement.

**Mr. Speaker:** I suppose I should allow you to speak, but please be very brief.

**The Attorney General:** I rise to a point of order! There is no motion before the Council.

**Mr. Speaker:** I realise that, Mr. Attorney. The great trouble about this is that I have tried my best over and over again to prevent Members taking this opportunity to say what has been said over and over again. I am not going to say anything more about it. Mr. Ramphal, if you wish to say something, please be very brief.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I have a very strong recollection that when the Federation motion was passed, one of the resolutions was that the Governor should be allowed certain freedom of action to keep in as close touch as possible with what was happening outside. I am not speaking for the Government but it is quite possible that the sending of delegates from this Colony is merely part of the formality being exercised. It is only that I wanted to say.

**Mr. Speaker:** I must ask hon. Members to appreciate that those Members have not left this Colony without His Excellency's permission, and I do not think Members need to protest against what His Excellency has done. We all know how useful it is to have someone to attend such conferences, so as to give us some idea of what transpires. As we all know, this Colony cannot be committed to any expression of opinion by these delegates. As a matter of fact no assent to Federation can be given except by the decision of an elected Legislature or by the consent of the governed—a plebiscite having been taken.

**Mr. Raatgever:** The Secretary of State never said that; he said "with the consent of the people of the Colony"—not the Government.

**Mr. Speaker:** I never said "Government"; I said "governed," which is a perfectly accurate expression. "Government" and "governed" are two different things, diametrically opposed to each other. That was my ruling—that this Colony can only be committed to Federation by the consent of the governed, which can be obtained in two ways, that is by an elected Legislature or by plebiscite. I gave that ruling before we had the debate on Federation, and the Rev. Mr. Bobb knows that I did say that. Members going to these conferences cannot bind this Colony or this Legislature, and I do ask Members not to think so. If Members would only read newspapers like the "Times" they would understand the position and would not be protesting against the sending of observers to these conferences. The Government know what they are doing and they are being well advised. I am sure His Excellency is acting on the best advice. I know that the Deputy Speaker feels very strongly on this question.

**Mr. Raatgever:** Very strongly.

**Mr. Speaker:** You may continue to feel strongly. I hope you will be here when the motion for the acceptance of Federation is being debated. Perhaps you will oppose it. We will now proceed to the Order of the Day.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

##### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

**Mr. Farnum** (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to move the first reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Local Government Ordinance."

**Mr. Kendall:** I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

##### PATENTS AND DESIGNS (AMENDMENT) BILL

**The Attorney General:** In moving the second reading of this Bill, intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Patents and Designs Ordinance"

I would remind hon. Members of this Council that by reciprocal arrangements, laws relating to the registration of patents and designs are kept as near as possible in the same form through all countries known as Convention countries, and these Conventions regulate the position with regard to patents in these countries. In pursuance of that legislation this country, under section 59 of the Patents and Designs Ordinance, provides that certain rights of the patentee and other members of the public in the case of a patent which has been registered in the United Kingdom and then re-registered here should

be regulated as at the date of the patent in the United Kingdom.

It is now sought to amend this provision. In 1949 the relevant provision in the United Kingdom legislation was amended, and the date for the adjustment of rights as between the patentee and other members of the public was altered from the date of the patent in the United Kingdom to a date which has been defined in the English legislation and is called the priority date. That date may vary according to the circumstances, but in the majority of cases it will still be the same date as that which was previously called the date of the patent in the United Kingdom. The object of this Bill is purely to change the reference in the Patents and Designs Ordinance to the priority date, as it is now called, instead of the date of the patent in the United Kingdom. Its operation will not make any difference at all in the majority of cases.

I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to second the motion.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does anyone want to speak on the second reading?

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause and passed the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

**The Attorney General:** I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time and passed.

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to second the motion. which are required to implement these proposals.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### SALARIES STRUCTURE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders in order to take the motion which I tabled earlier this afternoon.

**The Attorney General:** I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Relevant Standing Orders suspended.

**The Chief Secretary:** The suspension of Standing Orders having been approved in order to enable me to take the motion, I now beg to move the motion.

"Be it resolved: That with reference to Council's Resolution No. IV of the 10th of May, 1956, this Council approves of—

(a) the adoption of the proposals set out in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1956 on Salaries Structure for Primary School Teachers subject to the amendments and recommendations contained in the Report of the Finance Committee of the Council dated the 19th of May, 1956; and

(b) provision of the necessary funds to implement the proposals."

The purpose of this motion is to ask this Council to adopt the proposals which are set out in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1956 as amended, and with the recommendations contained in the Report of Finance Committee, dated 19th May, and also to seek approval of this Council of the provision of the funds

The proposals in the Sessional Paper relate to the Report of the Committee which was appointed by His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, with the approval of this Council, on 24th June, 1955 to inquire into the salary structure for Primary School Teachers and to make recommendations thereon. As hon. Members will have observed, almost all of the recommendations of that Committee — which is now best known as the Potter Committee — have been accepted. The variations which the Government has made are set out in the Sessional Paper and the majority of them are improvements on the Potter Committee's recommendations.

I should first of all like to say a word about the Potter Committee's Report. There is no doubt whatever that it was a most outstanding piece of work. The Secretary of State for the Colonies said, in commenting on it, and I will quote —

"In general, I think the Committee's proposals reflect a wise and progressive professional outlook, and they should go a long way to make the teachers' conditions of work reasonable and encouraging."

The British Guiana Teachers' Association describes the Report as "comprehensive and scholarly," and complimented the members of the Committee on its production. It is, I think; particularly gratifying that this report has been produced by an all-Guianese committee. (*Applause*). I deem it a great privilege that it falls to my lot to present this Report to this Council. I fear that in my inexperience I may not do it justice, and if I fail to do so I crave the indulgence of hon. Members. I am comforted in the thought that others more competent than I will prob-

ably speak after me and give full credit to a very deserving document.

It is a matter for considerable regret in my opinion, that so much publicity has been given recently to one particular aspect of the proposals which are before us today. Thereby the impression may have been formed in the minds of the public that the recommendations of the Potter Committee's Report — which have been almost entirely accepted—are inadequate and unacceptable to the teaching profession. I am referring, of course, to the publicity about the date from which the proposals should operate. I should like to make it quite clear at the beginning that any such impression is false, and that the Potter Report was widely acclaimed and the teachers, I understand, are very satisfied with the proposals in it.

Now, what do these proposals really mean? They are not—as some people seem to think—just a revision of salary scales. They are proposals for revising completely the career prospects of primary school teachers. They are designed to increase efficiency, to make the profession of teaching more attractive and thereby to retain in it many teachers who at present are thinking of leaving it; and, also to attract into it in the future the best possible type of recruit.

The proposals include many things. They include the replacement of a multiplicity of salary scales — I think there are 31—by two basic scales, thereby clearing up a tremendous amount of discontent and saving a great deal of administrative inconvenience. They provide for rewards for teachers who by training or study improve their qualifications or experience. They provide

adequate remuneration for teachers who hold posts of special responsibility. The two basic scales also provide for improved remuneration to every teacher in the service, taking into account additional awards as well. Most teachers will receive from \$20 to \$40 per month extra, some Head Teachers as much as \$80 per month extra as a result of these proposals.

But this is not all. The proposals also provide for an up-to-date method for training teachers—and training is of the greatest importance—and provide particular attractions for bringing in entrants from the secondary school stream into the profession. Last, but not least, there is provision for those little schools in the outlying parts of the Colony known as "Regulation 95 Schools." These schools are often established under great difficulty and maintained under great difficulty by a very devoted band of educationists. The proposals seek to make the future of these schools more assured.

In short, these new proposals provide a completely new deal for primary school teachers which should make this profession sufficiently attractive to enable any person who has a vocation for teaching to fulfil that vocation and be adequately recompensed at the same time. I know hon. Members will have studied the Potter Report and the Sessional Paper with great care, but in view of the importance of this matter I would like to go through the Sessional Paper as quickly as I can to bring out the main points in these recommendations and any variations which the Government has proposed.

Paragraph 4 of the Sessional Paper deals with the proposals that there should be four main categories of teachers, Qualified Teachers Grade 1, Qualified Teachers Grade 2, Unquali-



[The Chief Secretary] fied Teachers and Pupil Teachers. Probationers and Student Teachers. In addition, there is a fifth category which the Potter Report termed "temporary" teachers, but which has now been changed to "Interim" Teachers. These teachers may be qualified or unqualified and brought in for short periods in an emergency. As hon. Members will see from the top of page 3 of the Sessional Paper there is provision to enable teachers to improve their grades.

Some doubt has been expressed about the proposal in the Sessional Paper that the Teachers' Certificate Examination should be continued for a period of grace of not more than three years until a suitable course of professional training can be arranged. I can safely give the assurance to anybody that the Examination will not be ceased until professional training courses have been evolved and that adequate notice of the cessation of the Examination will be given.

Paragraph 6 of the Sessional Paper deals with the recommendation that schools should be graded not by average attendance but by enrolment. This proposal has been acclaimed by the educational authorities, and it will relieve Head Teachers of a most unfair responsibility. It has been accepted by Government, the only difference being that the alphabetical grading has been turned around. Paragraph 7 of the Sessional Paper deals with the recommendations which have to do with the salary scale for qualified teachers. This is the first of two basic salary scales.

The scale which was proposed in the Potter Report has been accepted by Government and is as set out in the Sessional Paper. There is provision for teachers of various qualifications to

enter the scale at various points. I should like to repeat that this, with one other scale, is in place of 31 scales which existed in the past—a very considerable improvement. Recommendation 14 of the Potter Report suggested that when a teacher earns additional increments by passing an examination, those increments should be granted to him with effect from the first of the month following the month in which the results of the examination are published. The Sessional Paper proposes that the introductory date shall be the first of the month after the one in which the examination takes place, to make sure that no teacher is penalized as a result of any administrative delay. That, of course, is an improvement on the Potter report.

Paragraph 8 of the Sessional Paper refers to teachers now in the Training College. At present, teachers in the Training College receive no pay whilst they are in the College, and for the two years during which they are there they do not earn increments. They are allowed to borrow money from Government, and when they leave the College they do not get any extra increment although, of course, they may improve their grade and are therefore eligible for future promotion. That was thought to be a hardship, and indeed it has precluded some of the best teachers from entering the Training College in the past. What is now proposed is that those teachers who are in the Service and wish to go into the Training College should be paid an allowance of \$65 per month, from which the cost of their board and lodging will be deducted, and at the end of their training they would be granted two increments in their salary scale so that they would go back to the scale at the same point they would have been if they had not gone into the College. I think the B.G.



Teachers' Association has made representations about this and pointed out that the arrangement would be unfair to teachers at present in the Training College. This point was re-examined and substance was found in the representations, so an amendment has been agreed on in Finance Committee. The effect is that the teachers in the Training College now, who are in their second year, will be paid the allowance as from the 1st of September, 1955—the beginning of their second year—for the whole of that second year, and will be given three increments. Those teachers entering the College this year will be paid the allowance as from September 1, 1955, thus in effect receiving the allowance during their whole period in the College, and they will also receive two increments when they leave the College. All future entrants will be treated as I have stated. I should like to make it clear that the scheme for training teachers at the College is a temporary one, because there are other proposals which will come up later for training them.

Paragraph 9 in the Sessional Paper relates to proposals for the salary scale for unqualified teachers. Here again, the scale recommended by the Potter Committee has been adopted. There are provisions for enabling certain categories of teachers to come into the scale at certain points above the maximum, and hon. Members will notice that there is a recommendation which will enable any qualified teacher with over 20 years' satisfactory service to enter the salary scale for qualified teachers and to proceed on that scale up to the bar—\$1,920 per annum. That category of teachers, who would otherwise have had no hope of promotion prospect, will therefore be able to look forward to further promotion.

Recommendation 25 (of the Potter Committee) has been accepted by Government. It is a recommendation that the salaries for pupil teachers employed under the Regulations at present in force should continue to be paid. The next two recommendations propose new arrangements for pupil teachers in the future. Briefly, these arrangements are as follows: Pupil-teachership will be reduced from the present period of four years, to two years. During those two years the pupil teacher would be very much a pupil and not very much a teacher. Up to the present, I understand, most pupil teachers have to spend more of their time teaching and have to pick up much of their teaching knowledge as they go along.

It is intended that in future these teachers will have to concentrate during most of the two years on learning their jobs, and there are recommendations for ensuring that their jobs will be taught them. It is proposed to pay them a maintenance allowance of \$30 (per month). That allowance has also been challenged by the B.G. Teachers' Association; they have made comparison with various posts in the Government Service and have said that the allowance is too small. I want to make it quite clear that this is an allowance, not a wage. Pupil teachers are meant to be students, and not wage-earners. Pupil teachers will be recruited from the primary schools and will be between the ages of 15½ and 16½ years of age. The allowance is designed to provide for their maintenance only. At the end of the two-year period, the best pupil teachers will be selected for training in the Training College and others will be offered appointments and put on the unqualified teachers' scale.

[The Chief Secretary]

The next recommendation deals with proposals for training probationers, and these probationers will be recruited from the secondary schools. They will also have a two-year probationship during which they will learn their job but, because of their additional age—they will be between the ages of 16 and 19 years — and because of their additional education, it is proposed to give them a higher allowance of \$70 per month. At the end of their training period, the best of these pupil teachers will be selected for training at the Training College and the rest will be offered appointments as unqualified teachers on the unqualified scale but, because of their additional qualifications, in the case of School Certificate holders they will be awarded five increments, and in the case of Higher Certificate holders, eight increments up. I should like to mention that the Potter Committee recommended seven increments, but in the Sessional Paper these have been increased to eight.

Paragraph 10 of the Sessional Paper deals with interim teachers — a group referred to in the Potter Report as temporary teachers — and I should add that the recommendation of the Potter Report in this respect has been accepted. There has been some doubt about the proposal not to appoint any more sewing teachers. The reason for this proposal is that it is considered that women assistant teachers who are now being appointed should be qualified to teach elementary sewing and that sewing teachers would no longer be required in the future.

Paragraph 11 of the Sessional Paper deals with the recommendations in the Potter Report relating to the qualifications for promotion. I do not propose to go through them in detail, but they

have been accepted in principle in this Sessional Paper. It is not proposed, however, that they should be adhered to rigidly because that might operate against certain teachers, but they have been accepted in principle.

Paragraph 12 of the Sessional Paper deals with the award of increments. It is proposed that no teacher shall receive the increments unless the Director of Education is satisfied as to his satisfactory conduct during the year, and I think that is beyond argument.

Paragraph 13 of the Sessional Paper refers to the recommendation in the Potter Report as to the various ways in which additional increments may be awarded for improved training courses. Here again, the principles which have been set out have been accepted. When a teacher goes abroad on a number of courses of training—that is to say, a course approved by the authorities and which would benefit him in his particular job — and he takes that course of training successfully, whether or not he obtains a certificate or a diploma he will be eligible to receive additional increments as a reward for improving his qualifications. The B.G. Teachers' Association has disputed the Government's proposal to accept the proposition that these increments should not be carried beyond the maximum of a scale, as was recommended by the Potter Committee.

I must concede that the wording of the first sentence in sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 13 of the Sessional Paper is not, possibly, as good as it might have been. Hon. Members will notice that it has been amended in the report of the Finance Committee to read :

"It is not proposed to grant the award of increments beyond the end of any scale."

It is true that in the U.K. such increments are granted beyond the maximum of salary scales, but in British Guiana the principle has always been accepted that that should not be the case. In the Civil Service similar increments are awarded to deserving officers who might improve their qualifications, but such increments are never granted beyond the maximum of salary scales. It has been decided that it would be better to maintain that principle for everyone.

Paragraph 14 of the Sessional Paper relates to remuneration or granting of a special award to the teachers who hold a degree. In actual fact, teachers holding degrees receive an award of \$20 already, and it is now proposed to increase that to \$30 per month. I might mention that this is more generous than that given in the United Kingdom in similar circumstances.

Paragraph 15 relates to recommendations for special responsibility allowances. The proposals in the Potter Report have been accepted, except that one variation has been made by increasing the allowance for a Headteacher in a Grade E school from \$17 to \$24 so as to put him on a par with a Senior Assistant in a grade C school. These proposals are a vast improvement on the present conditions and, in addition, they will result in the creation of 70 new posts for Deputy Headteachers and 26 new posts for Senior Assistant Teachers, thus giving a considerable number of extra opportunities for advancement for teachers. The allowances which are provided are set out in the Sessional Paper and will be paid to the holders of the posts in addition to their salaries. There has been some dispute about the proposal in recommendation 44 (of the Potter Report) that if a school is down-graded, there should be

a period of grace of one year during which responsibility allowances of the higher grade will be paid, after which the allowances will be reduced if the school has not recovered its original grade. The fact of the matter is, however, that these allowances are designed to be paid to certain people with certain responsibilities, and it is not considered right to go on paying these allowances indefinitely to persons who are not entitled to them.

Going back for a moment to the allowances, I should like to say that it has been agreed that in any school where there are two Senior Assistant Teachers, one at least should be a woman, and she should be particularly responsible for the discipline of the girls. I think that is a commendable idea. In addition, the Deputy Headteacher and for that matter all the holders of these senior posts will be charged in writing as to their duties, and will be particularly charged with the instruction of the lesser qualified teachers who serve below. In that way I hope that the pupil teachers of the future will receive really proper instruction.

Going on we come to the recommendation which deals with the Heads of Centres and with the Guide-Lecturer of the Museum. Here the Potter Committee's proposals have been accepted, but the provision that only qualified Grade 1 teachers should in future be made Heads of Centres has been accepted in principle only, and not rigidly, because it may be the case that a qualified Grade 1 teacher may not be available on every occasion, and a very deserving person without that qualification may be available and should be appointed. It will be seen that the qualified Grade 1 teachers who are in charge of these Centres will have status

[The Chief Secretary]  
equivalent to Deputy Headteachers,  
Grade D schools.

Turning to paragraph 16 of the Sessional Paper we find the recommendations for acting allowances. Here again the conditions for acting allowances which are set out clearly in the Potter Committee's Report, have been accepted in principle by Government. I think the general principle of paying acting allowances is a good one. It provides an incentive to people to accept higher responsibilities, and provides a fair reward for the additional responsibilities which some people have to bear. It is certainly a very big improvement in the conditions of service for teachers.

Paragraph 17 of the Sessional Paper refers to Regulation 95 schools. As hon. Members know, those schools are in the outlying areas of the Colony, and they present a special problem. They are small and it is generally very difficult to get teachers to serve in them. Very often teachers who do serve in them are drawn from the locality in which the school is situated, and do not always have either the academic qualifications or the training which they should have. What we are proposing for the future is that as many of these schools as possible should be absorbed into groups in larger central schools, and that the teachers who serve in them should be given special training. Hon. Members are invited to accept these proposals in principle, so that we can go ahead administratively working out the details of the scheme which is necessary to implement these proposals.

For the time being it is proposed that all Regulation 95 schools should be graded as Grade E schools, and thereby should be fully grant-aided, and that the teachers in them should get the

benefits which I have described in my speech this afternoon. It is intended in the future that no school of under 40 enrolment should be recognized, but it is not proposed to enforce this proposal at once, as we want to give really adequate time for all the various difficult problems to be considered fully.

Paragraph 18 of the Sessional Paper deals with the recommendation that in future the number of pupil and probationary teachers recruited should be related to the actual needs of the year.

Paragraph 19 deals with the proposals for the future training of teachers. In the future it is proposed that a two-year course should be run in an improved and enlarged Teachers' Training College for students coming straight in from primary or secondary schools after their period of probation. In addition it is proposed to provide special courses in professional training for teachers in service. These will be shorter (six months to a year) and they will enable some teachers to obtain training and to improve their qualifications. This will avoid the very grave administrative difficulty of taking away teachers in service for a period of two years for training, as is the present arrangement. Detailed plans of this proposal are being prepared to cover both sides of the training, and hon. Members are asked at this stage to accept the proposals in principle.

Paragraph 20 deals with the method of conversion to the new scales of salaries. I will not attempt to try to explain the conversion tables this afternoon, as night would fall before I was finished. I would like to say this, however, that when the Potter Committee's Report was submitted and after it had been studied, the Teachers

Association made representations that the conversion tables proposed would create a large number of anomalies, and a large number of teachers would stand to lose. Government took cognizance of those representations and referred them back to the Potter Committee. The Committee sat again and produced a new set of conversion tables which, it has been generally agreed, correct the anomalies and inequalities that existed before. The revised tables are going to cost the Colony an extra \$74,000 a year. I think it is worth it and I am asking hon. Members to agree to it. But I would like to stress this: let no one say that Government has not listened to and acted upon helpful advice and criticism, for this is a clear case in which Government has acted on advice even though it has meant a considerable increase in the cost of the proposals.

Paragraph 21 of the Sessional Paper deals with the financial implications. I am not going to say very much on this question, as my hon. colleague, the Financial Secretary, will very likely have something to say about this later on. I would just like to say that if these proposals are implemented with effect from 1st January, 1955, they will cost approximately \$500,000 in 1955 alone, and that will be in addition to an amount of over \$400,000 which has already been paid out to teachers as a result of the Hands revision, for the period 1954-55. The continuing liability in 1956 and afterwards will be more than \$500,000 per annum, and will obviously become progressively more as teachers now in the service earn extra increments, and as extra teachers are recruited to serve in the additional schools which are being built. It is a large sum and one has to think very carefully about it.

I come now to paragraph 22 which relates to probably the only really contentious matter in all these proposals—the date from which these proposals should be effective. First of all I would like to remove some misapprehensions. First, the Potter Committee did not make any recommendation about this question. It could not do so; it was not in its terms of reference, and so it was not competent to do so. What the Committee did do was to record that the unofficial members of the Committee (four in number) supported strongly a request by the Teachers Association that the proposals should be ante-dated to 1st January, 1954, and I must of course point out that two of those unofficial members were teachers themselves.

The second misapprehension which I want to correct is that the effective date of these proposals must be related to the salaries revision proposals of Mr. Hands. That is completely wrong. Mr. Hands, as hon. Members will see from the Sessional Paper in which an extract from his report is quoted, revised the existing salary scales of primary school teachers as he found them, and he said that although he did not very much like those scales, he did not conceive it his duty to revise their structure. He then went on to say that Government might consider setting up a small Committee to investigate the position. He did not say that Government *should* but Government might.

When the salaries revision proposals based on the Hands' recommendations were put before this Council in Sessional Paper No 3 of 1955, the section dealing with primary school teachers recommended that the revision of the existing scales by Mr. Hands should be accepted; that the suggestion by Mr. Hands that a Committee should be set up to revise the structure should

[The Chief Secretary]

also be accepted, and finally it stated categorically that any proposals which that Committee might make, and which might be adopted, should not be retrospective. When that Sessional Paper was considered by Finance Committee, the Committee accepted the revision of the existing salary scales as proposed by Mr. Hands, subject to the setting up of a Committee to revise the salaries structure.

In the report which Finance Committee sent back to this Council, and which was accepted in conjunction with the Sessional Paper, there is nothing about a retrospective date at all. So Members will see that it is quite clear that there is no obligation whatever on this Council to give any retrospective effect to these proposals. Indeed, if anything, there is obligation on the Council not to do so, but I am asking that Members should not be so harsh as that. You may ask why has the date 1st January, 1955, been suggested? That is set out very clearly in the Sessional Paper. It is an accepted principle of Government in dealing with matters like this, to give effect to such proposals from the first date they are accepted by the Administration, and in this case the first date is the 1st January, 1955. I would ask hon. Members to accept that date.

When I first saw the papers I expected that I would have to be fighting a battle here for teachers to persuade hon. Members to go as far back as that date. For all I know I still am, but after seeing all those criticisms in the newspapers about the 1st January, 1954, I began to wonder which side I was going to be on. I think the 1st January, 1955, is a fair date. I think it is fair to the country and fair to the teachers, and I ask hon. Members to accept it.

Paragraph 23 of the Sessional Paper refers to promotion opportunities. This is a matter in which dual control, as it is called, is closely related, and no pronouncement can be made until the Denominations concerned have been fully consulted. I think there is every hope that a reasonable compromise can be worked out, and that adequate opportunities for promotion will be provided for teachers in the future.

There is just one last point which is not mentioned in the Sessional Paper or in the report from Finance Committee, but results from representations which have been made both by hon. Members and others. I refer to a special plea for Headteachers and qualified teachers who are likely to retire before they reach the maximum of their salary grade. A request has been made that they should be given additional increments to enable them to reach the maximum before they retire. It has been agreed that this provision should not be written into the Sessional Paper or formally accepted by the Council, but it is proposed that Government should accept the proposal in principle and deal with each case on its merits. I would like to make it quite clear that the award will not be automatic; it will be given to teachers with meritorious service and who really deserve it.

Hon. Members, if I have wearied you with my explanation of the details of this Sessional Paper, then I apologize. I have done so because I consider it of vital importance that the implications of these proposals should be fully understood by everybody. These proposals are generous but they are deserving (*hear, hear*). Teaching is a vocation and unless a teacher has that vocation he is unlikely to be a good teacher, but, and I am sure all teachers will for-

give me for saying this, "the labourer is worthy of his hire". These proposals now before you will, I am confident, make a teaching career in primary education sufficiently well-rewarding and attractive to enable any man or woman with a vocation for teaching to follow that vocation and to be adequately rewarded in doing so. Hon. Members, I earnestly commend this motion for your approval.

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to second the motion, and I rise to speak in support of it. The Chief Secretary has spoken eloquently about the proposals in the Sessional Paper, and I feel I need do no more than give a brief account of the financial implications of the Sessional Paper and to set them against the background of the Colony's financial position. I would also like to add my small quota to the great amount that has already been said about retroactivity. The proposals will cost some \$474,000 in 1956. Making them retroactive from 1st January, 1955 will cost about \$920,000. Hon. Members are aware that in the recurrent estimates they have voted \$600,000 for revisions of salaries for teachers and nurses in 1956. I cannot, of course, anticipate what the cost of the revision of nurses' salaries will be, but it is quite clear that the revision of teachers' salaries as proposed in the Sessional Paper will itself be considerably more than \$600,000, without taking the nurses into account at all. I think we must count on having to find an additional three quarters of a million dollars on, and the recurrent estimates for 1956 as a result of the revision of salaries now proposed together with the revision of nurses' salaries.

In considering the present proposals it must be borne in mind that the

teachers have already had as a result of wages and salaries by Mr. A. C. Hands an increase in salaries which cost about \$225,000 a year; so that the total increment over pre-1954 salaries for teachers will be about \$700,000. I may also say that the cost of the revision of salaries which Mr. Hands recommended for the civil service was something like \$2.3 million so it is quite clear that if the present proposals are approved the teachers will have done very well compared with the civil service. And it is also quite clear that the cost will take up a substantial part of the Colony's financial resources, which are not very much, having regard to the calls made upon them. Nevertheless, as the Chief Secretary has said, Government has recognized that it is necessary to do something substantial to improve conditions for teachers and any good Government must be prepared to pay what is considered a fair wage for its servants.

The cost can be met in several ways. We can consider four: first, an increase in taxation, second, curtailment of existing services, third, postponement of development proposals, fourth, in happy circumstances, a natural increase in revenue. As regards taxation it must be remembered that although an increase might produce more revenue there comes a point at which one cannot increase taxation any more and the law of diminishing returns applies: we may not get more revenue, but less. Our reserves are not very large and if things go well, we shall finish up with about \$5 million in the general revenue balance after the end of this year, that is, after putting aside \$4.8 million for the 1956 Development Estimates. It may, of course, be that there is underspending on the 1956 recurrent estimates, but that cannot be relied on, and it may be that



[The Financial Secretary]  
revenue will increase in a natural way. I just do not know yet—we shall have to wait and see how we shall meet the bill for these teachers' salaries.

The proposal in the Sessional Paper is that the salary scales should be accepted and that they should be retroactive to 1955, but there has been a great deal of publicity, *ad nauseam* almost, in favour of further retroactivity to 1954, or against it. I have observed the arguments on both sides, and I personally am of the opinion that the Potter proposals do constitute a completely new deal for teachers and they need not be linked in date with the Hands' proposals. That is a fact rather than an opinion, and I will try to show how it is a fact.

If the percentage increases under the Hands' revision for the scales which the majority of teachers are on over the pre-1954 scales are compared with the increases on similar scales for the rest of the service, it will be seen that they were very much within the same range—between 30 to 40 per cent. for both qualified and Senior Assistant Teachers, and similar civil service scales.

Under the proposals in the Sessional Paper the percentage of increase at the minimum of the qualified teachers' scale is 60 per cent. over the 1953 scale and 84 per cent. at the maximum; and for the Senior Assistant Teachers' scale—70 per cent. at the minimum and 82 per cent. at the maximum. I am not suggesting that these are absolute increases in cost, because, as hon. Members are aware, there have been provisions for the cost of living. I am merely taking it scale to scale. That being so, it is quite clear that the proposals in the Potter Report and in the Sessional Paper do take them right out of the range of the revision of salaries in the

civil service. You will remember I said that while the range was between 30 to 40 per cent., it is now between 60 to 82 per cent. That is why I say it is a fact, that it is a new deal with no case for retrospective effect from 1st January, 1954.

To sum up, I would say that the new scales are fair and we should find the money to meet them from some source if we are to increase and maintain the volume of good teachers. But I would say that it is sufficiently generous and justifiable to ante-date them to January, 1955. I would also say, emphatically, that we just cannot afford to be so over-generous as to ante-date them to a date earlier than January, 1955.

**Mr. Speaker:** The motion has been proposed and seconded. Does anyone else wish to speak on it?

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** I have listened with consuming interest to the speech of the Chief Secretary and the supporting speech of the Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary has indeed brought forward many logical arguments in support of this very important Sessional Paper, but his logic in my view, broke down at crucial points; especially on the question of retrospective effect of the Sessional Paper proposals.

I am duly mindful of the consequence of increased cost to this country if the teachers are given that which they have, in my view, justifiably asked for. They morally deserve the fulfilment of their request, and I want to say at the outset that any increase in taxation that would result from honouring a claim which Government has, in my view, shelved over a period of years would be an

increase which is worthwhile. I wish to go on record as saying that I would agree to such taxation. I can say without fear of contradiction that the masses of this country would admirably come forward and say that they would not mind paying one cent more on any commodity in order to honour an obligation to the teachers who look after one-fifth of the Colony's population, and to make them satisfied.

I happen to have belonged to the teaching fraternity and there lingers in my memory an old saying, "The teaching profession is the noblest of professions, but the sorriest of trades." I think those are the words. I have had the honour of taking part in a symposium on the topic, "That a disgruntled teacher is a danger to the school." I am told—and I speak subject to correction — that it would cost this Government a total of \$4 million to grant the teachers' request. That is indeed a tidy sum, but when one considers that this amount would have a favourable effect on the education of one-fifth of British Guiana's population and improve conditions of work among teachers. I do not think that such an amount would be ill-expended. I think that there are Members of this Council who would agree to the expenditure of such an amount and who would not take kindly to the idea that the teachers should be treated otherwise.

I challenge anyone to disbelieve that from time immemorial teachers have been the lowest paid among professional workers. In this country in the teaching profession persons have been known to start at \$5 per month. Yet teachers have kept the educational system intact and have produced leaders of the community, like Dargan, Crane and others whose names

will go down in our history. Those teachers in the primary schools were not university graduates.

I am surprised at the attitude of my friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal, who himself seemed surprised at the statement that teachers were the lowest paid, but of course he spent most of his time in a high school and not an elementary school. I remember in the old days having to ride a donkey to go to school. I have just been told by an hon. Member at this table that he rode an animal of a higher category. But, returning to my point, in days gone by teachers were inarticulate as a body and they suffered silently. When they organized themselves they began clamouring for a revised structure of salaries. In and out of season they have made representations to the Department to correct the fantastic state of affairs affecting their profession. However, successive Governments felt that the claims of the teachers were not justified, or were without foundation.

Then it was Government's own expert from abroad, Mr. Hands, who bemoaned the fact that there was no revised salaries structure for teachers. The inference to be drawn from that is that an expert came to this country and agreed with the teachers' long established claim. I am not an expert but an ordinary layman. It is an unwritten rule that we have to attach to the opinion of the expert the importance it deserves and the degree of credence due to it. The question of a revised scale for teachers did not come within the ambit of Mr. Hand's inquiry and as a result he had to retreat with dignity from this very important problem. Whose fault was it? Government raised the salaries of civil servants to 1st January, 1954, made allowances to legislators to 1st January, 1954 and

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]  
is leaving teachers to start from January, 1955.

We would be going on record as having been guilty of inconsistency and, in my view, of not having done our duty to one-fifth of the population of this country. I appeal to hon. Members of this Council—and I think I hear someone whispering that teachers do not work, but teachers cannot be blamed for the education system which we have copied from no less a place than the Mother Country. Holidays are given for children and, reluctantly, teachers have to take them also. (Laughter). It is only someone who has been a teacher in a primary school would know that during holidays a teacher is on duty, except for a few hours. As a matter of fact, a teacher is never off duty, and I hope hon. Members will accept that opinion or view. Therefore, if ever teachers get a few days as holiday they are entitled to that.

One or two teachers have been leaving their schools and identifying themselves with politics—perhaps politics of their own kind—but we must be consistent, however. Unless we do this, I would charge Government with being inconsistent. We know of civil servants—and high-ranking civil servants at that—who have been engaged in activities of a kind that Government would not expect from them. It is said that teachers have been responsible for the rise in the barometer relating to juvenile delinquency, but I do not agree with that. They turn out the children from the schools, but they are not altogether responsible for them. After all, those children are of tender ages and how could such a blame be placed at the door of the teachers.

I would ask Members of this Council not to allow this perhaps alarming figure (required for the relief) to dissuade them from doing justice to the teachers. We know that teachers have been struggling to make two ends meet—through bad housing conditions rents have skyrocketed and things of that sort—and I would ask this Council, as a magnificent gesture, to assist the teachers who, unlike Civil Servants and others, have not been enjoying the benefits that they have so long been clamouring for. The Colony's finances have been improving and will continue to adjust themselves, so I do not think we have anything to fear in that respect. Only today one hon. Member was complaining that funds were being wasted to send representatives to Federation and other conferences abroad.

**Mr. Raatgever:** Sir, I did not say that. I only referred to one particular instance—where I thought that one Member should have been sent to represent the other side—the anti-Federation side—at the Conference which was recently held in London.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** I thought the Deputy President was not following me, Sir, but I am sure now that he is doing so. We know, however, that in the meantime people have been attending conferences abroad that have not done us any good. One should like to find out also why all these experts have been coming here. I have not made these remarks because I was once a teacher myself, and I am not singular in claiming that any money spent on education in this country will be well spent. That is my view, Sir, any money spent in ameliorating conditions and helping teachers to adjust themselves in order to meet the high cost of living, would be money well spent. I repeat that I am

prepared to take whatever criticism comes my way from any quarter in this country providing this relief is given—even if it results in increased taxation—and if I know the people of British Guiana, they will pay it with pleasure.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I rise not because my name was mentioned in the debate. Indeed, my hon. Friend (Mr. Sugrim Singh) believes that he gains weight for his remarks and improves his position by an alliance with certain other people. I rise because I am convinced of the position which I took up in Finance Committee. But, first of all, let me say that if there is a teacher in this community who feels strongly about the teachers and the claim they are making in this matter, I am he. As I look around in this Chamber I see persons who were erstwhile my colleagues, and though I cannot claim to have served in the lowest ranks of the profession in the primary schools, I have had the honour and privilege of being the Head-teacher of several primary and secondary schools. I can look back with pride and without any regret whatever on those days, but I do not think there are many others who can lay equal claim to such a history.

It was said by one hon. Member who spoke in this debate—indeed it was stressed by him—that this is a question of money, but I could not and would not look upon this question from that point of view. There is only one criterion we should consider, and it is this: Is it fair and just that the teachers should have their pay made retroactive to 1954? That is the only test.

We have had the misfortune also of hearing that if we refuse to pay the teachers (as from 1954) they are going to reduce their energies and would not play their part in the schools as they

should. That was said in the Press but, speaking from my position here, I do not think the question of cost is connected with any question of reduction in their service. I have one and only one test to apply in this matter and that is, is it fair and just that the teachers should receive retro-active pay as from 1954? If it is fair, I would be the first person to agree to it. I have examined this question very closely—have studied all the documents concerned—and I know that every word I say here has been repeated to the teachers—but I wish to say that on the very basis of their argument that their salaries were not revised in 1954—on that very basis—they lost their case. In the Potter report—on the very first page—there is a quotation from the Hands Report which has been used by my friends to support their case. I wish I could have done so on logic or in justice to them, but there is one sentence which has not been *taken* out of its context. It is in its proper place and it reads:

“I have therefore revised the salaries of the 31 existing scales which are attached to Appendix V to this Report.”

In other words, the claim that the teachers had for taking their salaries back to January, 1954—on the basis that there was no revision—is defeated by what Mr. Hands has placed on record. In other words, revision (of salaries) was made in respect of civil servants and a revision was also made in respect of teachers. That is crystal clear to me and to other Members of this Council.

A challenge was thrown out that the teachers were the most miserably paid people in the community, and the hon. Member added that they had been subjected to that kind of treatment from time immemorial. They were not the only people who had been suffering that way, however, since there were the

[Mr. Ramphal]

sicknurses and dispensers, and others; but the worse treated people of the whole lot were the nurses. I am very glad that these people are being looked after by separate Committees, and I trust that a report similar to this Potter report—giving a career scale to these people—will be produced.

I would have been one of the very first persons to advocate as strongly as I could that teachers be given back-pay to January 1, 1954, if I felt that they had a good case, because it was I who pressed Government when the matter was first discussed in this Council on the question of retrospective pay. If it were not for the fact that I am clearly satisfied that the teachers received a revised salary scale, I would have been in the forefront to defend their cause. Further, we were equating increases with the Financial Secretary while we were in Finance Committee, and we found that the percentages received by teachers were not less favourable than those given to the civil servants generally. There were anomalies but they were gone into and dealt with in the Hands report. That was clearly stated by the Financial Secretary, and I want to state here—without giving any offence — that it is not true to say that teachers were not well treated in the Hands revision. It may be that there are still anomalies, and I would be first among hon. Members in my approach to Government to ask that those cases of anomalies which could stand investigation be gone into even at this late stage, and I strongly request that that should be done.

I recommend also that Government should say to the teachers: "We are convinced that teachers have had a revision of their salary scales, not less favourable than that of the civil servants." The hon. the Chief Secretary has already

said that this Council at no time committed itself to retrospective payment to January 1, 1954. I think that hon. Members who spoke that way must be drawing very heavily on their imagination to say that we have been acting inconsistently. As a matter of fact, one hon. Member went so far as to say—and has left that impression on the minds of the Members who are sitting in this Council—that teachers are responsible for the juvenile delinquency in this Country. It was the very first time I heard such a statement from any Member of this Council. It is not my custom to challenge Members, but I do challenge anyone to say that in this Council any Member said that our teaching fraternity was responsible for juvenile delinquency.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** I am sorry my friend has not been as agile as the hon. the Deputy Speaker in following my remarks closely. I said nothing of the sort, but if I did convey that impression I wish to remove it. There has been a good deal of newspaper controversy about teachers being responsible for our juvenile delinquency.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have heard what is called public opinion. The hon. Member did not lay a charge on any individual.

**Mr. Ramphal:** I have one great saving grace; I am not a politician nor do I have political aspirations. Therefore I can speak very freely, keeping one criterion before me — that I must be fair at all times to all men.

**Mr. Speaker :** What do you mean by "political aspirations" ? Do you mean that you would not preside or speak at a political meeting, or do you mean that you would not offer yourself as a candidate? Is that what you mean? If

you did not have political aspirations you might not have been here.

**Mr. Ramphal:** Your Honour is kind enough to draw me out. I yield all the ground to you. From my knowledge of the teachers and from my happy relationship with them, I feel that, generally speaking, they have accepted this matter.

I wish now to turn to one question which is a matter of some concern. I refer to the last point to which the hon. the Chief Secretary referred to—those aged teachers who have given long and honourable service to the community, and who, because of the regraded scales and the method of conversion, find themselves in higher scales, but who will never be able to reach the maximum of their scale. A very strong and unanimous plea was made in Finance Committee that Government should apply to them similar consideration to that which was given to such teachers in 1946. Government has given us an assurance that while it is not prepared to go through the whole process of enacting an Ordinance, it will do what is fair and just to those teachers. I heard the Chief Secretary say that it will not be automatic, but that consideration will be given to those who are deserving.

That is exactly what was done in 1946. Those who had been teachers for a certain number of years and whose schools had received a good certificate over a period of years were the ones who received special consideration. If Government applied the same test as was applied in the case of the Ordinance in 1946 I do not think the teachers concerned have anything to fear. I am one of those who put my faith in the word of Government, therefore I am confident that Government will play fair with those teachers who deserve extra increments in respect of which hon. Members

of this Council made a unanimous recommendation in Finance Committee.

Finally, I wish to join in the expressions of congratulations to all the members of the Potter Committee on this very valuable and historic document which they have produced. It is simple, it is direct, it is honest, and it constitutes, as the hon. the Chief Secretary has said, a new deal for teachers. It is not a new grading, not a revision, but an absolutely new deal for teachers. I therefore wish also to associate myself with the observation made by the Chief Secretary that this masterly document is the work and achievement of Guianese people. We have heard it said that we place more credence on people who come from abroad. God forbid that that should continue. We have people who can produce a document like that, and I hope we shall never be assailed with a statement of the former.

I wish to support the motion so ably moved by the hon. the Chief Secretary, and to commend it to my teacher friends, my brothers. Let it be said again that I feel most happy when I am teaching. I feel that the day will come again when I shall be a teacher, but with this one exception, that I shall not then be teaching for money, but I shall teach again. God giving me life long enough, I shall return whence I came. I therefore trust that our teachers will accept this as a fair deal, as a new deal. I challenge them to do anything less.

**Rev. Mr. Bobb:** If I were not a member of the Potter Committee I would have considered it still incumbent on me to rise to speak on the motion before the Council today, but I am rather impelled to speak for a few reasons. One of them is that I think this motion is of such great importance in leading this Council to come to a decision which is going to be of lasting significance to

[Rev. Mr. Bobb]

the teaching profession and the people of this country, that not to speak upon it and express my personal views is to be guilty of a great omission.

Secondly, it occurred to me that a sufficient reason for me to speak now did spring from the suggestion made by the hon. mover when, in commenting on the section of the report which asks for retrospective pay to the 1st January, 1954, he referred to two of the unofficial members of the Committee as being teachers. To begin with the second reason I am going to attribute to the hon. mover the best of intentions, and put the best possible construction on the statement, as I am moved to feel that he was suggesting that I could not help being very sympathetic with the teachers, having been myself a teacher.

Having said so, and feeling myself that that is what he had in mind, I want to suggest that the statement itself is possible of another interpretation—that in the examination of the facts before the Committee I might have been inclined more to a subjective than to an objective analysis. On that score I do not have to use many words to explain myself, because I am sure every member of the Committee will agree that I have done all that it was possible for me to do in order to do justice to the position I hold as an impartial member dealing with a very important subject. Otherwise my position there would have been quite out of place, for I realized that any errors made by that Committee would have had a deeply adverse effect on this community, in that, firstly, the Committee was composed, as the Chief Secretary reminded us, of all Guianese, and, secondly, the appointment was made following a recommendation in circumstances which caused the whole country to be alive with anxiety and expectancy that the

best thing possible would eventually be done for the benefit of the teaching profession.

I am very pleased to be able to acknowledge here that the work of the Committee has come in for so much commendation by the Administration, by Members of the Council, by the Teachers Association and by the general public, and on behalf of my colleagues on the Committee I humbly accept the encomiums they have poured upon us in respect of the work we have tried to do.

My friend, Mr. Sugrim Singh, with whom I have been associated in many ways both inside and outside of this Council, has been at pains to advance the case in support of a proposition which he considered correct. Whatever I shall say I would like hon. Members clearly to understand is neither in support of Mr. Sugrim Singh nor of his opposite in this debate, Mr. Ramphal, but is my independent objective view of the entire situation as I have been seeing it. In the Committee's report itself hon. Members will notice on page 36 some words which seem to me to be the pivot for further deliberation of the whole question. I refer to the motion that was moved and supported by the unofficial members of the Committee with respect to retrospective pay from January, 1954. In the Committee's terms of reference there was no suggestion that a recommendation of that kind was permissible, and the Committee did in this case, as it did in one or two other instances during its discussion, allow the representatives of the Teachers Association to exercise a privilege, and they put forward that motion. The words to which I refer are these:

"The representatives of the Teachers' Association, however, asked leave to move a formal motion to the effect that —



The actual words of the motion follow, at the end of which the report states:

"This motion was strongly supported by the four non-official members of the Committee. The three official members abstained from voting. We think that Government should be made aware of the strong feelings of the Association on this matter."

Recognizing that it did not come within the Committee's terms of reference, I felt that the motion could only have the status of an ancillary recommendation to Government and, incidentally, to Finance Committee to reconsider what had already been stated in the Sessional Paper with regard to retrospective payment not being made from the 1st January, 1954. As it was, Government adhered to its previous stand. Finance Committee, by a majority vote, did not give the motion the status necessary to provide for the setting up of machinery which would make it possible for retrospective payment from January, 1954. I may be all wrong, but what I mean is that if payment were to be made retrospective from January, 1954, the value of the conversion table would have to be reconsidered. The Potter Committee based its recommendation on the Hands-Jakeway proposals and worked from there. If it had to work from the 1953 figures which were basic salaries plus cost of living allowances, its whole approach would have been different. That is what I had in mind. If that recommendation had been accepted it would have meant that the conversion table would have to be thrown back into the melting pot, because the situation would have had to be reviewed completely.

Now, however desirable was the motive for the implementation of that motion, which would give to the teachers retrospective pay from the 1st of

January, 1954, it is my view that from the time that motion was not accepted by the Government, seeing that it did not come into the terms of reference, the case was clear that the motion would not take effect at that point. In other words, when I saw that the Government had not taken the motion at that point I knew that my support in committee was not to be taken any further and as far as my personal support was concerned, I had lost. I hope I have made myself clear on that point. That, to my mind, is the crux of the matter.

Now, I come to the next point. I have myself examined the scales with the help of some people whose knowledge of these things I can count upon and I came to the conclusion that there was some danger in retrospective pay from the 1st of January, 1954. Speaking within the hearing of some of those gentlemen with whom I discussed this point, I had an intuition upon which I worked later on, and I came to the conclusion that retrospective pay from 1st January, 1954 may benefit a great majority of the teachers but may constitute a loss to others. I submitted that proposition to the hon. Member, the Financial Secretary and if I am wrong, he may correct me, but my understanding is that that is the case, and that the amount of the loss to the entire teaching profession would be in the vicinity of \$130,000.

**The Financial Secretary:** Speaking on a point of correction, I never gave a figure to the hon. Member. It all depends on how the conversion is done and whether there is a loss.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member said that he never gave an idea of the amount.

**Rev. Mr. Bobb:** Well, perhaps when he was speaking I thought of a figure which really related to something else,

[Rev. Mr. Bobb]

but he did affirm that it would be the case that there would be a loss, and I think that as a financial expert we have to place weight on his advice in that regard. Therefore, on the point whether the teachers would gain by this new structure, most reluctantly, but necessarily, I have to accept the reality of the situation for I see that there is no better, no more advantageous condition for them than retrospective payment from the 1st of January, 1955.

There have been suggestions about the new structure being made on the basis of the Hands' revision, so that even when those scales were revised a new deal was offered, I grant that in a few instances that was so, but in the over-all picture it does seem quite clear that if any change took place in respect of the rest of the service it was not of the magnitude of the change created for the teaching profession by the Committee. This is not the place and time for histrionics, but I would like to go on record as saying that the Committee has done its best for the teaching profession.

I myself have been at pains to consult with certain responsible teachers on the possible effect of some of these recommendations, and to get their views and, generally speaking, I shall be sorry if, after hearing what I have said today, those persons do not feel I have honestly pursued the course which I had set out on at the beginning and that I acted in their interest to get the best possible results. I am not at all persuaded by the arguments that the retrospective payments should not be made because of lack of public funds. In that respect something of what my friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, said I entirely endorse. The principle is that if a thing is just and money is needed to implement it, then the money must be found. When the money is found, by

whatever means, it should be implemented, and if I thought that was the real reason why the date, 1st of January, 1954, was not accepted, I should most positively vote against it, but I do not believe that is the reason. Other Members have expressed themselves as not influenced by that fact. I am not, but I do think that the Teachers' Association could be excused for making out a case as strongly as possible for retrospective payment from 1st January, 1954 — I think any other body of workers would have taken the advantage to do something similar.

At the same time I do not think it is fair to say that there was no revision by the Hands-Jakeway proposals as set out there. There was a revision, and what the Potter Committee did was to produce a new structure which, in effect, brought them a further revision (if you like to call it that), and when we look at the percentage increases on the Hands-Jakeway proposals for the entire service—I have the figures before me—we would agree that the figures compare very well. I shall not read out the figures, because the Financial Secretary has already referred to them, and I see that the range he referred to compares with the range I have before me. Therefore, the argument that a new deal has not been made out is not sufficiently cogent in this case.

If a new ground for determining the quality of work, the quality of the teacher and the quality of pay is arrived at, I contend that it is a new structure, and the fact that the percentage is very much higher, as the Financial Secretary pointed out, as much as 84 per cent. increase, in one case, shows that something completely new has been introduced.

So I close by expressing this hope: that although this decision of mine, which appears to be going back upon my support of the motion in committee,

may be unacceptable I am fortified in knowing that I am doing that which I have considered right. It will be a sorry day when we refuse to reflect upon a situation and revise our judgment accordingly. I once heard a description of a gentleman as "a man who knows when to break a promise." I am not going to say that I accept that description of a gentleman, but I think it is virtuous when we are faced with the realities of a situation to be courageous enough to accept those realities and to pass judgment upon them. Of all the Members of this Council I am perhaps the one upon whom must fall the greatest brunt of criticism if there is criticism at all, because I was the only Member of the Council on that Committee. So my friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, will take comfort, because neither he nor any other Member of this Council, whether in the political field or not, will face it.

My hope and belief are that, having set forth my reasons for taking this stand, the general public will know, and the Members of this Council will appreciate how it came about that I gave support to this motion, and that they will be able to follow my argument. Now I say that there is no opportunity, no chance and, to use a strong word, no justification to press for retrospective payment from January 1st, 1954. There is something very commendable in the dating of retrospective payment, that is, from January, 1955, in that it does show that Government considered that there must be a starting point and measure of consistency in dealing with these things. If there were anomalies, then the proper thing to do would have been to go back to January 1st, 1954 when the anomalies were created, but what we saw when dealing with anomalies was that the anomalies in the Hands-Jake-

way Report were corrected from time to time.

What we were dealing with really, I repeat was a new structure, and I submit that since there had been a review, and since there is a completely new structure which necessitated a new scale of salaries being formed and since the terms of reference excluded any recommendation on retrospective pay, there is no alternative but to accept the recommendation which has come from the Finance Committee to this Council that payment should be from January 1st, 1955, and I hope and trust that everyone will be fully satisfied and that time will heal whatever scars there are.

**Miss Collins:** While I must agree that the Potter Committee has done good work, I regret that I cannot give support to the proposal for retrospective payment from 1st January, 1955. As I said in Finance Committee, I supported the proposal for retrospective payment of civil servants from 1st January, 1954 and I wish also to support the teachers' claim for retrospective payment from the same date, because I am convinced that the teachers are in need of it. Many criticisms have been levelled against the teachers which I strongly protest against.

I am satisfied that the teachers have played an important part in the development of this country through the education of its children. They were responsible in a very substantial way for the training of the people who are today holding positions in the civil service and other services. Since 1949 the teachers have been advocating for revised salary scales and they are not responsible for the fact that Mr. Hands refused to deal with the matter. We accepted the Hands-Jakeway Report and after that, agreed to the appointment of the Potter Committee. Why? Because

[Miss Collins]

we were not satisfied with the situation. Much has been said about political parties. I am supposed to be a politician because I am an executive member of a party, but whether that was so or not, I would be prepared to support the teachers' claim, because what is good for the Civil Service is good enough for the teachers.

**The Chief Secretary (replying) :** I wish, first of all, to correct a statement which I made when moving this motion. I said that at present teachers in the Training College get no increments when they go back into the service, but that is wrong. The position at the moment is that they get no pay whilst in training, but they have to get loans from Government. They finish up at the end of two years owing Government several hundred dollars; but they get three increments when they go back into service. What Government is proposing is that they should get allowances during their two years of training and two increments when they go back into service. I am quite sure they would be better off that way. In any case, as I have said, these arrangements are purely temporary—so far as teachers in the service are concerned.

I have noted the remarks made by hon. Members very closely, and I am glad to note that there has been no strong objection to any of the recommendations in the Potter Report and that Members appreciate what a good report it is. Quite a lot has been said about the retrospective effect which should be given to the proposals, and while I do not wish to add anything more to my speech I should like to refer briefly to the remarks of my hon. and Rev. Friend (the Rev. Mr. Bobb) about the discussions which he had with the hon. the Financial Secretary. In fact, I think he had some discussions

with me and I told him that if the present proposals were made retrospective to the 1st January, 1954 and the teachers were, at the same time, called upon to refund the amounts they received from the Hands revision, many of them might stand to lose. The real point is, however, that had the Potter Committee intended that their proposals should be retrospective to January, 1954, the Committee would probably have devised their conversion tables, and indeed the salary scales, on an entirely different basis. That is the real fact of the matter.

I should also like to refer to my hon. and Rev. Friend's reference to my remarks about the support given by the unofficial members of the Potter Committee to the Teachers' Association's request for retrospective payment to 1st January, 1954. I had not realised that he was a teacher; I was not, of course, referring to him as one. I would add that I was not casting any aspersions on the two teachers on the Committee, since I have a high regard for them. They were there as representatives of the B.G. Teachers' Association, however; and would not have been human if they had not supported the suggestion which was made. If I had been in their place, I certainly would have done the same thing.

My closing words will be that I hope all the Members who have taken part in this debate will realise that the question of the date from which these proposals will be put into effect is not the fundamental or most important matter with which we have dealt this afternoon. The most important matter—the most important thing we have done—if hon. Members will accept these proposals—is that we have provided a completely new deal for primary school teachers. We have given fresh hope to

teachers of today, and to teachers of the future.

**Mr. Speaker :** I would ask the Council's indulgence to exhaust the period of time left for this sitting in order to give a few of my own personal recollections about early primary education in this Colony. Before doing so I should like to observe that this is the first occasion within the life of this Council that we have had anything like an audience in the public gallery.

I am reminded of the time when there were some very bold champions of education who were associated in the publication of a very efficient magazine whose main policy was to espouse the cause of the teaching profession. It was called *The Guide*, the editor of which magazine, now a retired Headteacher, is one of the occupants of the gallery. I will tell hon. Members of some of my own experiences about education—about criticisms that have been made and incidents that have taken place in this very Chamber—and they must judge for themselves whether blame should be attached to the Government of those days, or whether they should lay the charge on the Legislature for what has been taking place.

In this Colony teachers have been associated with politics for a long time, and for many years the Chairman of every political meeting—whether held in Georgetown or in the country districts—was always a Headteacher of one of the primary schools. I am sorry to think that some of that interest in public matters, as well as the respect in which primary school teachers in general should be regarded, is waning. I think it would be a sorry day for this country if that continues.

Let me tell hon. Members that it was the teachers themselves who were large-

ly instrumental in preventing the Governor of this Colony from presiding over the meetings of the Board of Education, a body which then existed. That Board was composed of the Governor and several Nominated Members, including both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Bishops, and two members of the teaching fraternity who, of course, were allowed to express their views as freely as any other member. One could not help being impressed by the views of the teachers or their representatives on education. The Governor of the Colony was then Sir Wilfred Collet, and in and out of season teachers urged incessantly that they were entitled to have better status and better pay. An editorial in *The Guide* appeared under the caption "To Arms!" I can recall how Sir Wilfred Collet reacted to this claim. He said "If you claim such rights I will give them to you if you become civil servants, as that would give me the right to suspend or dismiss you as the occasion arises." It is for the teachers themselves to judge how far their position today would have been improved if they had accepted that offer.

The Education vote — that is, the cost of elementary education — when first I sat in this Chamber, was then costing the Colony \$166,000 per annum, 80% of which was the provision for the payment of teachers' salaries. The vote has been increased to many times that figure, and we are still discussing teachers' salaries.

As regards the education provided for children residing in the country districts of this Colony, I think they were placed at a very great disadvantage for a long number of years in not having the benefit of an extended period of primary education afforded them, while children in Georgetown, New Amster-

[Mr. Speaker]

dam and Buxton could attend primary schools up to the age of 14, and not up to 12 as the Regulations stipulated. Surely the children in the country stood in greater need of being educated than those in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. I have never been able to understand why certain legislators voted as they did. As the years went by teachers were paid from school fees. There was an award for a certain average school attendance, and children were allowed to remain in school for another year.

Much is being said nowadays—and rightly so—about the conduct of children attending the elementary schools. It is quite unfair to say that the public behaviour of children is solely due to the teachers. Parents generally are to blame for this sorry state of affairs. Apart from the foul language indulged in by some of them, I have seen children pluck flowers from gardens and take them to school. Surely the teachers should know that these have been unlawfully obtained. I think that the time has come when children in our elementary schools should be disciplined to the extent of being expelled for grave offences, just in the same way as children are disciplined in schools where their parents are paying for their education, and not as is the case where children are receiving free education.

I think hon. Members are aware that it costs the Colony something like \$4,324,658 to meet the cost of elementary education, and if I am wrong those are the figures supplied in the 1956 Estimates. The point is that the vote increases automatically as the population increases, and will continue to increase. It is one of the many serious problems which this Colony has to face, and now that it has been decided to re-

vide the salaries of teachers I hope they will realize that for what is claimed to be very generous treatment being extended to the teaching profession, they in turn owe a duty to the community. I doubt very much whether any fully elected body would have done it, in spite of what Mr. Sugrim Singh has said — that he was quite sure the electors of this Colony will support this motion. I shall now put the question.

Motion put, the Council dividing and voting as follows:

*For*

Mr. Jailal  
 Dr. Fraser  
 Mrs. Dey  
 Mr. Rahaman  
 Rev. Mr. Bobb  
 Mr. Macnie  
 Mr. Phang  
 Mr. Ramphal  
 Mr. Raatgever  
 Mr. Luckhoo  
 Mr. Tello  
 Mr. Farnum  
 Mr. Kendall  
 The Financial Secretary  
 The Attorney-General  
 The Chief Secretary—16.

*Against*

Mr. Sugrim Singh  
 Miss Collins.—2.

*Did Not Vote*

Mr. Carter—1.

Mr. Speaker: The result of the division is that there voted for the motion 16, and against 2, while one did not vote. The motion is therefore carried. There being no other business I adjourn Council *sine die*.